

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE MANUAL
Chapter XIII: INTERIM CHANGES	COMAR 07.03.03.15
Section 1: INTERIM CHANGES	

Purpose

This section discusses customer responsibility to report changes that affect TCA eligibility or payment amount, how changes can be reported and how the agency will act on reported changes.

I. Requirements

A. Customers must report changes that affect eligibility or the amount of the benefit within 10 days of the change, except:

- The customer must notify the Family Investment case manager within 5 days of knowing that a child will be absent from the home for more than 180 days

B. Changes that occur during the certification period are interim changes (IC)

C. The customer must report changes in:

1. Household size and family composition
 - a. Additional household members, including newborns and others moving into the household
 - b. Individuals who leave the family
 - c. Children age 16 and above and minor parents of any age who drop out of school
2. Address
3. Assets
4. Unearned income
 - a. Date benefits started or stopped
 - b. Benefit increase or decrease
 - c. Gambling (including lottery winnings) or other lump sums
5. Earned income:
 - a. Full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time
 - b. New employment
 - c. Loss of a job
 - d. Changing from one job to another

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- e. Rate of pay
- f. Child care expenses
- 6. Customers must report changes in earned income within 10 days of receiving the first pay that reflects the change.
- 7. If earnings are for piecework, customers must report when the gross amount increases or decreases by more than \$100 per month.
- D. Customers may report changes: in person, by telephone, mail, and fax or by other electronic means or they can have a representative report the change for them.

II. Case manager action on changes

- A. When the change will increase the grant, case managers make the effective date the month following the month in which the change occurred
 - 1. If the customer reports the change after the month in which it occurred, make the grant increase effective the month following the month it is reported
 - 2. Supplemental grants are needed only when the case manager is not able to make the change effective for the following month
 - 3. Do not give a supplement for the month in which the change is reported
 - A supplement is not given for the month the customer reports the birth of a child or other new family member in the home
- B. When the change will decrease the grant, the effective date of the grant change is:
 - 1. The month following the month in which the change occurred, but
 - 2. No later than the second subsequent month following the month in which the change occurred
 - This delay occurs when the adverse action notice period expires during the month following the month the change occurred

Example 1: On May 12, Margaret reports the oldest of her three children moved out of the household. The case manager completes the action in CARES to reduce the household size and sends a system generated adverse action notice on May 16. The 10-day adverse action period ends on May 26 and the reduction in the household size takes effect on June 1.

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Example 2: On May 25th Jessica reports that she got a job on May 5th and had received her first pay. On May 27th the case manager adds the income change to the CARES system and sends the system generated adverse action notice. The 10-day adverse action period ends on June 7. Jessica's benefits are not reduced until July because the adverse action period expires in the second subsequent month.

- C. The case manager must always evaluate continuing Food Stamp and Medical Assistance eligibility if the change causes an individual or an entire family to be ineligible for TCA
- D. Give the customer the opportunity to complete an application to register to vote:
 - 1. When a change is reported
 - 2. When a change of address is reported by mail
- J. Treat a case transfer as an interim change

Note: If the customer wants to continue to receive benefits pending an appeal, the grant is not changed, if the appeal is filed 10 days or less after the **NOAA**. If the local department's decision is upheld at the appeal hearing, the change is effective the month following the appeal decision.

III. **Calculate an overpayment when:**

- A. The customer does not report a change timely
- B. The local department does not act on the change in a timely manner, or
- C. The local department's decision was upheld on appeal and the customer received benefits pending the appeal decision

II. **Anticipated changes**

- A. Create a **745 Alert** when changes that affect eligibility or the benefit amount are anticipated
- B. Some examples are the:
 - 1. Expected child - use Expected Date of Confinement (EDC)
 - 2. High school graduation of a child age 16 and above – use month of graduation
 - 3. Projected end of a work program assignment – use month program ends

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- C. Contact the customer to confirm that the anticipated change actually occurred before taking action

III. **ADDING A PERSON TO THE ASSISTANCE UNIT**

- A. A customer can report changes in the number of people in the assistance unit in the same manner that other changes are reported: in person, by mail, by fax, other electronic method or by having a representative report the information.
- B. Add a person without income to the grant the month following the month that the change is reported.
- ◆ Increase the regular allotment for Food Stamps issued 10 days after the change is reported, but no later than the month following the month the change is reported
- C. Adding a person with income may cause an increase or decrease in the grant
1. Make the TCA grant change effective the month following the change, but no later than the second subsequent month, depending on whether an adverse action notice is required, or if required, when it expires
 2. Follow the TCA requirements to change the Food Stamps
 3. Add the person to CARES and finalize the case, then add the income

Note: When adding a person to the assistance unit, Medical Assistance coverage is effective the first day of the application month.

Note: If the new person is subject to the Child Specific Benefit (CSB), the child is added to the assistance unit, but the amount of the CSB is calculated off line and vendored to the third party.

IV. **Custodial parents convicted of a drug felony**

- A. Effective July 1, 2000, custodial parents who were convicted of a drug-related felony after August 22, 1996 are eligible for TCA if the parent:
1. Applies on or after July 1, 2000
 2. Agrees to comply with substance abuse testing and treatment requirements
 3. Meets all other financial and technical eligibility factors, and

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4. Was not convicted of a drug-related felony on or after July 1, 2000 while receiving cash assistance unless one year has expired since the conviction – see D below
- B. Add the parent to an on-going grant effective the month after the parent applies
- C. If the parent refuses to comply with substance abuse testing and treatment, deny the application for that parent and count the parent's income and assets to the eligible household members
- D. A custodial parent who is convicted of a drug-related felony on or after July 1, 2000 while receiving cash assistance, is ineligible for one year from the date of conviction and is subject to substance abuse testing and treatment requirements
 1. When the change is reported, remove the custodial parent after giving adverse action
 2. Count the income and assets of the excluded parent (except the non-parent caretaker relative) for the eligible assistance unit members
 3. Process an overpayment from the month of the conviction to the effective date of the grant change for each month the custodial parent received assistance
- E. Set a **745 Alert** for one year from the date of the conviction

V. **Newborns**

- A. Customers may report the birth of a newborn in any of the usual change reporting methods.
 1. The birth registration process includes applying for a Social Security number and is automatically done in Maryland hospitals
 - The number should be available from the customer by the next recertification or no later than 6 months from the date of birth
 2. The case manager should obtain as much information as possible about the absent parent of the newborn child, when adding the child to the assistance unit.
 - ♦ The parent or caretaker relative must assign the right to any child support collected on behalf of the newborn child over to the State in return for TCA benefits.

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When adding a child to an existing TCA assistance unit (AU) and that child has the same absent parent (AP) as the children in the assistance unit, the case manager must make sure to review the CARES APID screens and the Child Support screens and match the same absent parent's name and CARES ID. Matching the correct AP ensures the Child Support case for the existing children and the child being added will link.

3. If the custodial parent of the newborn is a minor, the minor parent must sign the **Form 1176** and be screened for substance abuse
- B. An automated interface between the hospitals and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) adds babies born to TCA mothers to the Medical Assistance household within a day of receiving notification from the hospital
 1. The case manager should check MMIS II to verify the newborn's birth and identity
 2. Adding the baby to the TCA assistance unit replaces the temporary Medical Assistance Identification (MAID) issued from the interface with the hospital with a permanent one.
- C. DHMH sends the local departments **Form 1184**, which provides information about the newborn, for each child born to mothers on Medical Assistance
 1. The customer may have reported the child's birth before the **1184** is received and no action is required upon receipt of the form
 2. If an **1184** is received for a child born to a TCA mother and the child's birth has not been reported, add the newborn if all other factors of eligibility are met.

VI. **Case transfers**

- A. Transfer a case when the family moves from:
 1. One county to another within Maryland, or
 2. One district office to another within a county or within Baltimore City
- B. Customers are responsible for notifying the case manager of the family's intent to move to another jurisdiction prior to the actual move
- C. The clearinghouse worker:
 1. Sends a message to the receiving jurisdiction of the pending case transfer
 2. Keys in the new local department or district office on CARES
 3. Completes the case transfer when appropriate

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D. Prior to transferring a case, a supervisor, a lead worker, or an agency designated reviewer **MUST**:

1. Complete an assessment of the case readiness for transfer, including documentation and narration that supports the eligibility decision
2. Assure that, to the extent possible, all outstanding work is done prior to the transfer
3. Review each case to be transferred for:
 - a. Outstanding BEGS – process, if possible, or transfer
 - b. Outstanding alerts – process, if possible, or transfer
 - c. Date the next recertification is due
 - d. An **INITIATED** recertification on CARES – **TRY** to complete a recertification already initiated on CARES before transferring
 - Make sure the new address is entered into CARES

Note: Retain automated scheduling of recertification appointments. To achieve this, it is necessary to transfer a case regardless of where it is in the cycle.

Note: Alerts assigned to the IRN# (Client ID#) must be manually transferred to the new case manager. Those that are assigned to the AU# will transfer with the case

- E. Send the paper record, with the Case Record Transfer Form attached to the front, by certified mail to the new jurisdiction within 5 working days of the CARES transfer
- F. The designated person in the receiving agency must review the case for:
 1. Any outstanding BEGS that have not been processed
 2. Any outstanding alerts
 3. Date the next recertification is due
 4. A recertification that has been initiated, but not completed

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G. If a customer moves and arrives at the new agency office without having notified the prior office, the new agency is responsible for taking action to provide services including:

- Contacting the former jurisdiction

H. Call the CARES Help Desk for technical assistance if needed

VI. **Verification**

A. Verification requirements for an interim change are the same as for an application

B. If a member of the customer's household is identified as an illegal or undocumented immigrant

1. Advise that a prorated portion of the income of the illegal or undocumented person will be counted as income to the customer's assistance unit
2. Direct undocumented immigrants to INS
3. Add the individual to the grant only after proof that the person is a qualified immigrant

C. Newly reported income and asset changes must be verified

D. New individuals must have proof of a SSN or proof of application for a number.

- ♦ Do not re-verify a social security number that has been verified.
- ♦ Review the CARES code next to the social security number field on the customer's CARES DEM 1 screen.
- ♦ The letters FV mean the number has been verified by Social Security and no other action is necessary.

E. Other information is verified only if questionable

Examples

Example 1. Ms. Mustard reports on May 3rd that her 14-year-old sister has moved into the home. She completes the Assignment of Support Rights and meets with Child Support.

- Add the sister to the TCA grant and Food Stamp household effective June 1st.
- Begin MA coverage May 1st

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Example 2. Ms. Plum reports on June 27th that she began working on June 18th and received her first pay on June 26th, which she verifies.

- Recalculate the grant and send adverse action on June 28th
- The effective date of the grant change is August 1st, since the adverse action period does not end until July 6th – 5 working days

Example 3. Ms. White reports on July 29 that she began working on June 25th and received her first pay on July 2nd, which was verified.

- Enter earnings on CARES and send adverse action on July 29th
- The effective date of the on-going grant change is September 1st
- Ms. White was supposed to report the new earnings by July 12 (10 days from the date of first pay). Calculate an overpayment for August, since that grant could have been changed if the new employment had been reported timely.
- **Give Ms. White the option of waiving the adverse action period to avoid the August overpayment. If she chooses to waive the adverse action period, change the grant for August.**

Example 4. Mr. Green reports on September 30 that his 15-year-old daughter, Natalie, had a baby girl on September 25 in a Maryland hospital. The newborn was added to the Medicaid files (MMIS) through the interface. Mr. Green does not know much about the baby's father. The case manager makes an appointment for Natalie to come into the office to get information about the absent father, answer the substance abuse screening questions, and sign the **Form 1176**. Natalie is going back to school as soon as the doctor signs a medical release. Natalie completes the requirements on October 10.

- Add the baby to the assistance unit effective November for on-going benefits
- Give a full month supplement for October after Natalie completes the requirements on October 10 because that is the month after the change
- Begin MA coverage for the baby in September
- Add the baby to the food stamp case effective with the October issuance

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Example 5. Ms. Hartford has been ineligible for TCA since she was convicted of distributing drugs in 1997. She does receive TCA for her two minor children. Ms. Hartford reapplies for herself on July 3, 2000. She agrees to all the drug testing and treatment requirements and meets other technical and financial eligibility factors.

- Ms. Hartford is added to the grant effective August 2000

Example 6. Mr. Connecticut receives TCA for himself, his wife and 3 children. On September 6, 2000, he is convicted of drug possession with the intent to distribute (a felony), but the 2-year sentence is suspended because it is his first offense. Mr. Connecticut reports this change on December 10, 2000.

- Mr. Connecticut's needs are removed from the assistance unit effective January 2001
- An overpayment is processed for October, November, and December
- A **745 Alert** is set for September 2001
- Mr. Connecticut is potentially eligible again in October 2001

Additional information

Payment Irregularities – Payment Irregularities

- Assistance Unit - Child Specific Benefit
- Other Programs and Services - Voter Registration
- Application - Verification
- Technical Eligibility - Social Security Number
- Technical Eligibility – Residence
- Financial Eligibility – Income – Ineligible Household Members Calculations